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## Abuse alleged at Forrest County juvenile detention center

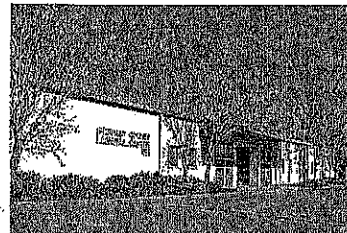
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HATTIESBURG, MS (WDAM) - Allegations have surfaced of abuse inside the Forrest County Juvenile Detention Center.

A court order from the Forrest County Youth Court prevents local journalists from showing material WDAM-TV's possession.



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It's behind the fence and concrete walls of the Forrest County Juvenile Detention Center where one former employee says those ordered to serve and protect are doing anything but.

"These kids civil rights are being violated and they're being mistreated for no reason," said the former employee.

We're calling her Alice. She was fired from the center this past summer and wished not to be identified on the air. With about eight years of working at the center, Alice says abuse at the hands of some guards was a common occurrence.

"I just really think something needs to be done. It's been going on far too long and there hasn't been anything done about it," said Alice.

A public records search reveals at least one guard was fired in January of 2009, citing misconduct. Sheriff Billy McGee confirms the firing was because of the guard beating a juvenile in December of 2008 and that charges are in the works against that certain guard.

Other than that, citing legal reasons, the sheriff's office isn't commenting.

Alice says the abuse wasn't from just one guard, but from multiple and some of the guards still working at the center are allegedly involved. Alice says whether it be over reactions or intentional abuse, guards were crossing the line when it came to juvenile discipline.

"You're suppose to be a better person to these kids. You're supposed to be able to talk to them. When you're dealing with kids, you can't do them like they're grown people, you got to be more like a role model to them," said Alice.

WDAM-TV has video and interviews with two former juveniles, now 18, who spent time in the center, all of which relate to these allegations. At this point, because of the order from the youth court, the television station is unable to share the material.

WDAM-TV will challenge the order in court Thursday morning.

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